

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7641
INFO AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
CINCPAC
CINCUSNAVEUR
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C O N F I D E N T P A L PORT LOUIS 0793

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PEPR PGOV PORS PORG ELAB EFIN MP FR SE RE UR OAU CU MA
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW - JULY 14, 1978 - SUMMARY

REF: PORT LOUIS 0764 (DTG 071034Z JUL 78)
PORT LOUIS A-59, JULY 14, 1978

1. THE THREATS VOICED BY REUNION ISLAND DEPUTY MICHEL DEBRE OF AN ECONOMIC BOYCOTT AGAINST MAURITIUS IF THE GOM SUPPORTS THE OAU CALL FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE ISLAND HAVE CAUSED A GOOD DEAL OF INDIGNATION HERE IN BOTH PRESS AND GOVERNMENTAL CIRCLES. PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM'S PUBLIC POSTURE HAS BEEN QUITE RESTRAINED BUT IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION HE TERMED DEBRE "SENILE" AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT FRANCE REALLY OUGHT TO GRANT REUNION INDEPENDENCE, WHILE RETAINING ALL OF ITS ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, POLITICAL AND MILITARY POSITION THERE. RAMGOOLAM DOES NOT WANT TO ANTAGONIZE
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THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, WHICH ACCORDS MAURITIUS SUBSTANTIAL AID, AND THIS PROBABLY ACCOUNTS FOR THE RELATIVELY PRO-FRENCH POSTURE ASSUMED BY THE GOM REPRESENTATIVES AT THE OAU CONFERENCE IN KHARTOUM. IN THE END THE OAU DROPPED THE ISSUE, BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF A REUNION "LIBERATION MOVEMENT."

2. MAXIME FERRARI, A MINISTER IN THE SEYCHELLES GOVERNMENT,

MADE A 24 HOUR VISIT HERE TO DELIVER A MESSAGE OF FRPENDSHIP FROM RENE TO RAMGOOLAM. THIS IS THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL VISIT BY A SEYCHELLES OFFICIAL SINCE RENE'S TAKEOVER AND CONFIRMS A WARMING OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. A NINE-MEMBER DELEGATION OF MAURITIANS HOPING TO ATTEND THE HAVANA WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL WERE TURNED BACK AT ANTANANARIVO BY THE MALAGASY AUTHORITIES, WHO PREVENTED THEM XROM JOINING AN AEROFLOT FLIGHT TO ODESSA, FROM WHERE THEY WERE TO TAKE A SHIP FOR HAVANA. THE REASON WAS APPARENTLY THAT THEY DID NOT REPRESENT THE MAURITIAN MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) OR OTHER "LEFTIST" ELEMENTS. THEY RETURNED TO MAURITIUS AND ARE NOW TRYING TO REACH ODESSA VIA CAIRO.

3. THE MMM IS TRYING TO REFURBISH ITS IMAGE AS THE PARTY OF "CHANGE," AND TO REASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT IT BELIEVES IN "LAW AND ORDER." PARTY LEADER PAUL BERENGER IS ALSO ORCHESTRATING AN EFFORT TO DILUTE THE PARTY'S IMAGE AS "PRO-SOVIET" IN FOREIGN POLICY. A LARGE NUMBER OF MMM MILITANTS HAVE BEEN HAULED INTO COURT TO FACE CHARGES OF VIOLATING THE PUBLIC ORDER ACT BY HOLDING ILLEGAL DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THEIR DEFENSE ATTORNEYS HAVE ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF TRYING TO REPRESS THE OPPOSITION PARTY LEGALLY.

4. THE GOVERNMENT BUDGET WAS FINALLY APPROVED ON JULY 5 AND TWO DAYS LATER THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WAS ADJOURNED FOR FOUR MONTHS. LABOR TROUBLES ARE LOOMING, AS THE PORT WORKERS HAVE STARTED A SLOW-DOWN WHICH IS SERIOUSLY AFFECTING SUGAR EXPORTS, AND

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THE MATIOMAL TRADE UNION FRONT IS THREATENING TO CALL A GENERAL STRIKE ON JULY 24 IF THEIR DEMAND FOR ACROSS-THE-BOARD TEN PER CENT WAGE INCREASES ARE REJECTED BY THE ROVERNMENT.

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